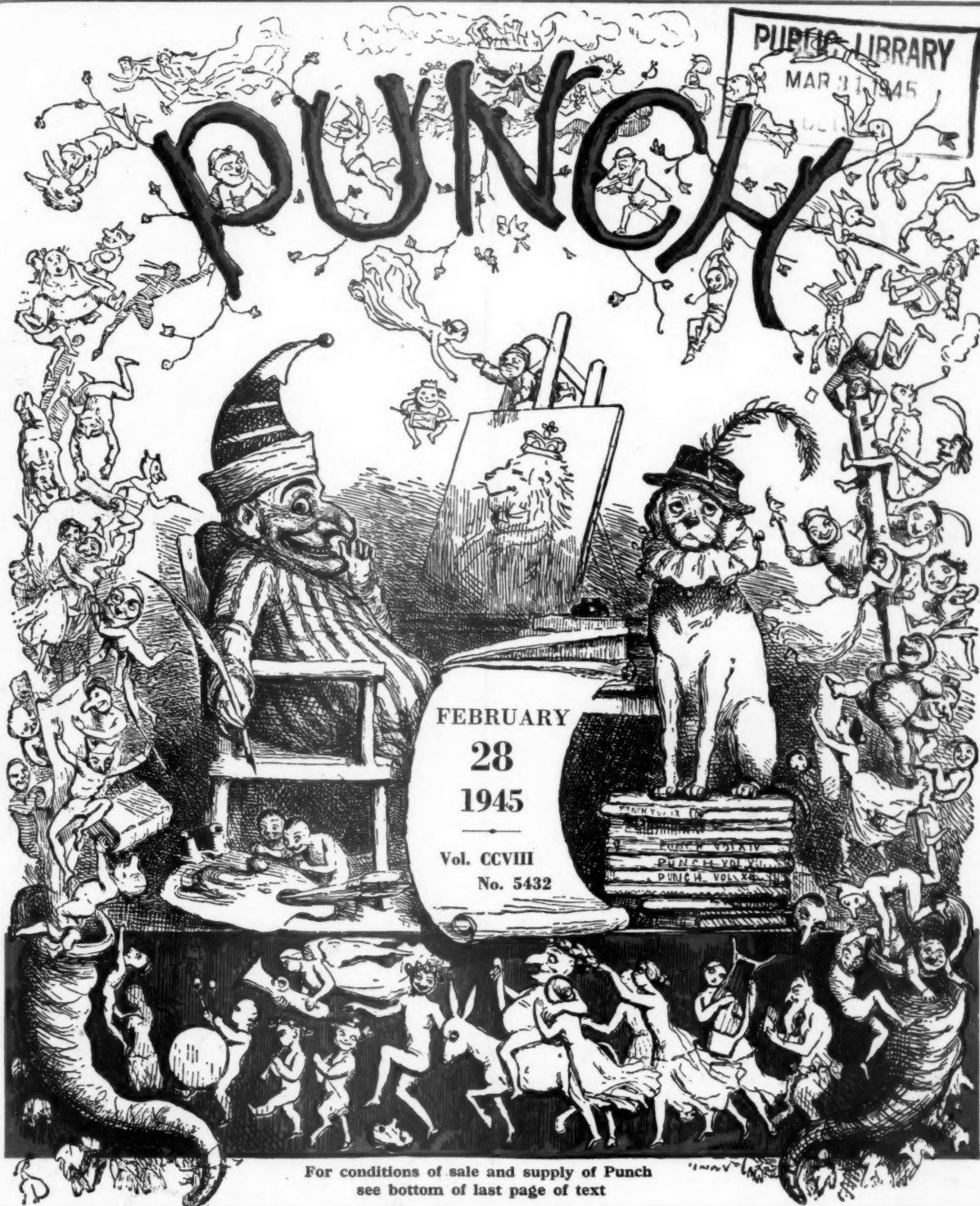


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to be a
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Lady



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NEW YORK TIMES says:
"No matter what happens we cannot fail in our friendship for the Chinese people."

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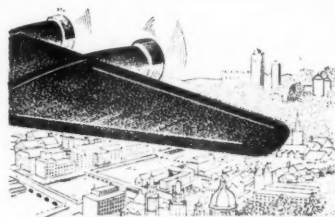
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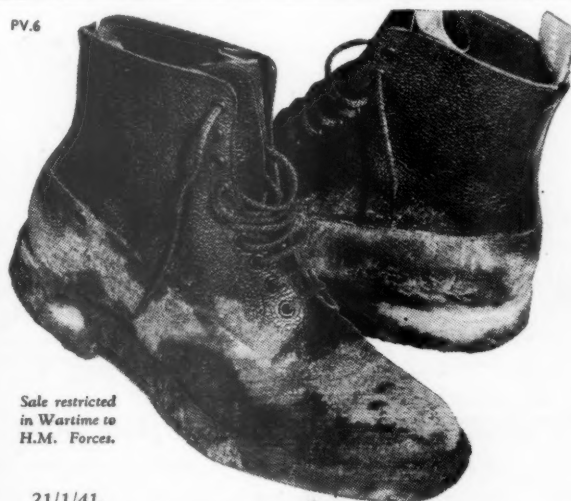


MEN who smoke Murray's Mellow Mixture won't give it up for love or money! It has a flavour all its own. Try an ounce of Murray's and see what you've been missing! 2/8 an ounce.

**MURRAY'S MELLOW MIXTURE**

MURRAY, SONS AND COMPANY LTD., BELFAST

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Sale restricted in Wartime to H.M. Forces.

21/1/41.

In the Spring of 1916 I bought a pair of Lotus Veldtschoen. I wore them throughout the war and since then every winter during the worst of the weather, and only this morning did they show the slightest sign of taking in water slightly.

## LOTUS

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**GUARANTEED WATERPROOF**

MADE BY LOTUS LTD. AGENTS IN ALL PRINCIPAL TOWNS

*Elegant*  
FRONT AND BACK



It's clever cut that prevents a "Gor-ray" Skirt 'seating,' that gives it that swing as you hurry on your way. The "Zwow" man-style pocket is another extremely attractive convenience.

All the better for the "Zwow" pocket.

Issued by C. Scillitz, Royal Leamington Spa

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Skirts

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**COW & GATE** MILK FOOD  
"Babies Love It!"



The radio industry has been tied down as far as supplying the public is concerned. But now there is the "industry" set in the shops for those who must have a new radio. We at EKCO have been far from asleep during these years and we're looking forward to proving how "wide awake" we are!

**EKCO**  
**RADIO**



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The 'finest' salt



**Mynheer Jan Kloofkamp** plump burgher of a recently liberated town in Holland, has the best of reasons for believing in continuing Anglo-Dutch amity. For, as he says, "We make the cheese, you make the Pan Yan pickle, and where would civilisation be without the Velshrabbit?" ... We think he rather has something there.

# Pan Yan

Spicy-sweet pickle  
that makes plain  
fare tasty and  
fine fare a feast.

MACONOCHE BROS. LIMITED LONDON

# Sparklets

(REGD. TRADE MARK)

All available supplies of SPARKLETS BULBS are being distributed as equitably as possible. For the present, please "go easy with the soda" and return empty Bulbs promptly to your usual supplier.

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A wine that has all the character & bouquet of those fine vintages which gave to Port its Historic vogue

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Fifteen and Six per bottle

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# MOCCASIN

*Two purpose  
Shoes*



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*This good cigarette  
in green packets*



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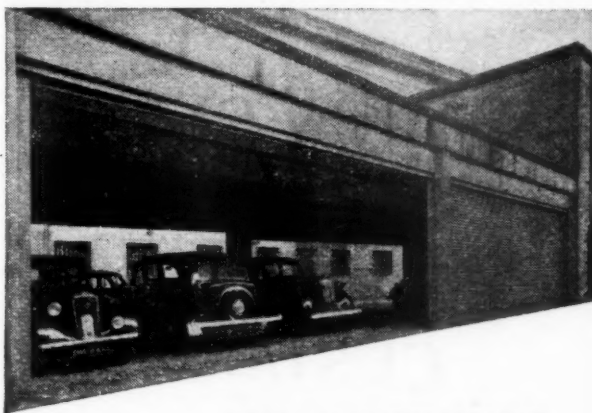
this way in



Many a way-in to a country house these days is more of a way up-and-down after five war years of wear and tear on the drive surface! Something will have to be done about re-surfacing as soon as the war is over, so you may be glad to be reminded about COLAS . . . Here's a surfacing material that has everything in its favour and not even high cost against it. COLAS is a bitumen emulsion that can be used as a sealing coat to bind an existing surface, or mixed with suitable materials as a complete new carpet. No special plant is needed for laying, and unskilled labour can make a perfect job of it. Remember, too, there's nothing in COLAS to burn or scorch grass verges, nothing that poisons water or harms fish or animals . . . Your own builder knows about COLAS, but we'll be happy, when the time comes, to send a specialist to consult with him if necessary.

## COLAS makes it smooth

COLAS PRODUCTS LTD: 5 CROSBY SQ: LONDON, EC3: AVENUE 5331



**WHEN MINUTES COUNT..**

**MATHER  
& PLATT  
Steel  
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Shutters**

As in the case of an urgent call to the mobile Police, electrically-operated Rolling Shutters are a decided asset.

That is one reason why Mather & Platt Shutters are installed in the Police Garage illustrated above.

ELECTRICALLY OPERATED  
PROVIDE *Quick* CLEARANCE

MATHER & PLATT LTD. MANCHESTER 10.



### A REMINDER TO ATCO OWNERS!

ATCO-OPERATION, the most efficient and liberal-spirited service facilities ever operated for any mechanical product, and acknowledged with enthusiasm by tens of thousands of Atco Owners, will be available as soon as conditions permit. Please keep in touch with your Atco Depot Manager or your Dealer, who will do everything in their power to help you.

# ATCO

CHARLES H. PUGH, LTD.,  
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## AND NOW... THE AUSTIN 10



for after the war

Among the many important war-time advances which distinguish this 10 from its 1939 predecessor are: engine and transmission improvements for quieter running and yet longer life; "softer" engine mountings; lubrication refinements ensuring longer bearing life; improved gear-box; easy variable-ratio steering; extensively sound-insulated chassis with strengthened spring mountings; stronger back-axle mechanism; seating and interior re-designed for added comfort.

In short, the Austin 10 will be the most comfortable, most dependable family 10 yet built.

★In addition to this 10, the Austin post-war programme will comprise 8, 12 and 16 H.P. cars—four-door saloons only, with choice of three colours.

THE AUSTIN MOTOR CO. LTD. (& Export Dept.) LONGBRIDGE WORKS, BIRMINGHAM

L.D. 131

## Monk & Glass IS JOLLY GOOD CUSTARD

Still the same high quality  
Sold by all good grocers.



"FOUR SQUARE *for me*  
—it's pure tobacco"

GEORGE DOBIE & SON LTD., PAISLEY, SCOTLAND



# PUNCH

OR

THE LONDON CHARIVARI



Vol. CCVIII No. 5432

February 28 1945

## Charivaria

SEVERAL neutral countries are trying to work out the exact date on which Germany will collapse, so that they can declare war on her the day before.

A prize is offered for a comedy radio script which must be the author's original work. The B.B.C. is evidently making a courageous effort to blaze a new trail.



Goebbels maintains that the German nation is behind the *Wehrmacht*. This is only because the *Wehrmacht* has pinched all the available transport.

A correspondent says he signalled violently from the kerb for twenty-five minutes and finally a taxi drew up. What did he expect? A coal-cart?

Puff

"Members of the U.S. Army Air Force Band played dance music last night in relays—at the Naafi Club, Bridlesmith-gate, Nottingham. It was truly a gale night."

Picture caption in Notts paper.

Goebbels promises the troops on the Russian front that more Nazi divisions will shortly be rushed from the West, but the latter still have an uneasy sort of a feeling that Montgomery thought of it first.



"Germany is not envious of any nation," declares a Nazi broadcaster. Although in Berlin it is wistfully admitted that it must be nice not to be at war with Russia as Japan isn't.

Anything for a Laugh

"While entertaining Lord Vansittart, following a public meeting, thieves attempted to steal the car of the Mayor, Councillor A. V. Nicholls."—*Daily paper*.

Men, it is reported, have blackened their cricketing boots for civilian wear. That's all right, but we doubt if the Members' Stand at Lord's would approve of players wearing black boots whitened for cricket.



A sporting writer predicts that there will be ice-hockey in London next winter. So at the cessation of the present hostilities our military commentators will be able to carry on.

The housing situation worsens: Government critics declare that if something isn't done soon about building permanent homes they won't be up before the temporary ones.

"It was quite like old times to see a crocodile of school-girls going for a walk," says a correspondent. Is he sure it wasn't a queue on its way to a sweet shop?



## It Wasn't Me.

(The astounding revelations which follow were made to Mr. Punch's special representative at Berne, and handed to him in a sealed packet by a Swedish commercial traveller on his way between Ankara and Madrid.)

I LOVED England. I hated Hitler. That is the secret of the part that I have played in this world drama. Very early I decided that the only way to thwart the Leader's wild ambition was to remain in the inner circles of the party that surrounded him and exercise a moderating influence upon his plans. From the very beginning he distrusted me.

"You are too much the gentleman, von Ribbentrop," he would often say, kicking me. "You lack Kultur." But I was determined, for the sake of England, to remain at my post. Money and power I disdained. My dream was to prevent war and to obtain by peaceful negotiations what the Fuehrer quite obviously intended to take by force.

Shall I ever forget the day when he announced his ridiculous project of marching into the Rhineland?

"Hitler, old boy," I said (only Goering, Goebbels, Hess, Fuchs, Fuss, Schacht, Macht and a few others were allowed to address him in this way), "that must you not do." He was eating a doughnut at the Chancellery when I uttered these words.

"What for not?" he inquired in a muffled voice, between mouthfuls.

"Because," I said clearly, "it will precipitate a cosmic catastrophe."

Even more ignorant than he was vain, the Fuehrer entirely missed the point of my epigram. Before he could take the trouble to consult a dictionary the fatal order had been given and my good advice had been thrown to the winds.

It was the same with Austria. Many will remember the occasion on which I gave the Nazi salute at Buckingham Palace. That action was widely misinterpreted. It was taken to mean that I owed allegiance to the very party which was trying to ruin my Fatherland and upset the peace of the world. In fact it was intended to bring the party into contempt by demonstrating the absurdity of its claims.

Hitler was furious when he heard about it. Publicly he struck off my epaulettes, and for a time I remained under a cloud. "Halifax, old son," I wrote, "I seem to have failed in my mission." (Incidentally, I was the only Ambassador who had the privilege of addressing Lord Halifax as "old son.") But when I left England my Chow remained at the German Embassy. Dog-lovers to a woman, the English have often blamed me for leaving my dear dog behind. Little they know that concealed in a note, which was tucked in that dog's collar, was a complete revelation of Germany's war plans for the subjugation of Europe, and the designs for several of our most deadly inventions of war. Unhappily, the dog became hungry and devoured it, thus plunging Europe into night.

There followed Munich. Here I took the side of Chamberlain and Daladier, and did my best to influence Mussolini on the side of Czechoslovakia. But I was unable to force my counsels on the headstrong will of the Fuehrer.

For a time I remained under another cloud. This was only dissipated when I pretended to encourage the attack upon Poland. But I kept my tongue in my cheek, knowing well that war with Poland would ultimately mean the ruin of the Nazi party and a triumph for Albion, the land I loved.

I helped to negotiate the pact with Russia. But even as I signed the document I winked significantly at my Russian *confrères*. I knew that the die had been cast and that civilization was in the melting pot. But I perceived also that in the end Right must prevail over Might, and I said to myself that the knell of totalitarianism was being rung.

Hitler came to hear of this wink, and once more I was under a cloud. "You drink too much champagne, Herr Ribbentrop," he said, dropping, for the first time, the "von."

I discouraged the attack upon France and the Netherlands. I threw cold water upon the *Luftwaffe*. I threw an ink-bottle at Goebbels. I encouraged the secret mission of Hess, sending with him a private message in code, which he apparently mislaid. I flattered Rommel; I made fun of the Gestapo; I encouraged the insubordination of the leaders of the *Wehrmacht*. I offered to take entire charge of the armies in the Eastern Front, knowing that was certain to bring about an early cessation of hostilities. But I was constantly flouted and gainsaid.

This was not entirely to my disadvantage, for it must be understood that Hitler was at all times inordinately jealous. It was his chief characteristic. If any general was successful he was immediately relieved of his command. If any Minister was praised in the papers he was at once degraded. The only way to make him do anything was to suggest that he had thought of it himself. Once, when I was under one of my darkest clouds, I recovered prestige by reminding him that he had taken a vow to ride into Leningrad on a white ass, and saying that I had already selected myself as the animal. This pleased him, for he was in one of his more humorous moods.

He hated Goebbels. He detested Himmler. He abominated Goering. He had the utmost contempt for Ley. He preferred praise of Mr. Churchill to praise of his own generals, who only received Grand Crosses and oak-leaves when they ran away. By continually flattering him, by appearing to be drunk, and by perpetually failing in all my diplomatic relations with neutral countries, I saw that I could remain in his favour and at the same time achieve my ultimate goal, which was to rescue the Fatherland from his tyranny and lay the foundations of a lasting peace. On the day that I burst into his private observatory at Berchtesgaden and told him that thirty-six nations were now in arms against Germany, Uruguay having now thrown the whole weight of her war-strength into the struggle, he actually smiled. "Well, von Ribbentrop," he murmured (he had restored the "von"), "no one can say that you have not done your best."

It was by these subtle and secret means that I was occasionally able to make him listen to the counsels of one who was always a good citizen of Europe and (as I have endeavoured to show) a devoted Anglophil, a democrat, a friend of Poland and a supporter of the U.S.S.R.

(Even more breath-taking revelations of the inner secrets of the Nazi party are likely to follow, when we think our readers have got their second wind.)

EVOE.

The fact that goods made of raw materials in short supply owing to war conditions are advertised in this paper should not be taken as an indication that they are necessarily available for export.



### COLD COMFORT

"But I'm told it's even worse in the Chief City of the Greater European Co-Prosperity Sphere."



"That's all for this month, lady—we're expecting the third glacial period at any moment."

## Spring Walk

THE first fine day in February always makes me restless. Let me go out (I said to myself) and share the overflowing sun with one wise friend or one, better than wise, being fair. However, neither the wise nor the fair being at hand, I went out alone.

If you walk out of the door here and take the path to the golf-course two possibilities lie before you. You can go straight to the first tee past a mulberry tree, or you can branch off to the left and enter a small garden which has gone a little wild since the rose-bushes were last pruned in 1939. I branched off to the left and met a crocus, which I addressed in the following terms:

"Well done, crocus. You do right to be out and about to-day. The aconite and the snowdrop are nice enough in their way, but give me a yellow crocus to put the finishing touch to a fine February day. Bloom on, my dear chap. And mind your head. There are birds about."

This was all I said to the crocus, but as I moved on I could not help wondering why the fowls of the air so regularly snap off the heads of the

yellow crocus but leave the mauve and the white alone, and why, if there is anything in the theory of evolution, the whole tribe of yellow crocuses do not tumble to the fact that it is their yellowness that betrays them and determine to come up next year with more of a mauvish or whitish hue. "Dash it all," I said, "the principles of camouflage and concealment are well enough known to Nature by this time."

Having by now emerged upon the golf-course, I found that I was making this remark to a middle-aged sheep breakfasting on the first tee. She made no reply, but waggled her head about in a way Vardon would never have approved. And yet, judging simply from her figure and the time of year I should have put her handicap at plus one, or even two.

We looked at one another for some time in silence. Sheep have rectangular pupils, like goats, which is odd considering how sparingly Nature goes in for angles. Whether they see life rectangularly on that account—whether, I mean, their vision is confined to a sharp rectangle with dark round the edges—I don't know. If so, their life

must be like one long visit to the cinema, which would account for that mad look they have. I have been trying to recall the shape of horses' pupils, but cannot. There are no horses here to which I could refer, and the only picture of one I can find (in *Hints on Jungle Warfare*, 1942) is designed more to illustrate the method of loading a mortar on its back than to show the shape of its eyes. In any case the animal is not so much a horse as a mule.

Pondering, as I was, on horses' eyes, I walked a little carelessly over the hump of a bunker and fell face downwards into some fairly casual water. It is extraordinary how quickly even at this early time in the year Nature's beneficent work of reproduction and growth shows its influence in the most unlikely places. Even in the short time my left eye was under water (my right was aground and out of action on some small sandbank) I could not fail to notice the miracle of springing life, the wealth of delicate green fronds, the tiny, almost impalpable organisms that had yet contrived to win and hold a footing in the minute ridges and fissures of the sandy bottom



of the pool. I saw no fish; but this was no disappointment. I have never been in doubt about the shape of fishes' eyes, which are round and staring, like those of old retired brigadiers.

While I was scraping sand off my right eyebrow an elderly man came up (a shepherd, by his dog) and greeted me in the friendly manner of the countryside.

"You'm been in t'watter, likely."

I said it was more than likely. Extremely probable, I said it was.

"Got wet t'ru," he added.

"No," I said, "not right through," and showed him the back of my coat to prove it.

"Fell in, ah?" he asked.

"Ah," I said.

"Got a bit o' summat on yer face," he pointed out.

I removed a tiny, almost impalpable organism from my chin and stood up. I would have liked to ask him why his sheep had rectangular pupils, but he didn't look to me the sort of chap who would know. So I left him.

On my way back I noticed that the yellow crocus had had its head snapped off. This, for some horrible Freudian reason, made me feel a great deal better.

H. F. E.

## Thanks

THE only explanation I am going to give of why my pen tasted of caraway seed is that an Austrian spy had dropped some in the ink. I sucked it for a bit. Then I wrote:

"MY DEAR MARY AND JAMES,—As always, it has been a great pleasure to stay with you. I enjoy staying with different people for different reasons, and the reason I enjoy staying with you is that you are both so good at giving the impression that you have taken no trouble at all. Naturally I like as much trouble as possible to be taken over all the arrangements for my reception, but it is embarrassing in the event to be made aware of it. If we might run over, in perhaps more detail than is usual, the—"

James came into my room.

"I hoped you were sleeping," he said. "Can I fill my lighter?"

"Officers never sleep at their post," I told him. "Mine is rather heavy to-day."

"Why the corrugated brow?"

"I'm writing a bread-and-butter letter."

"They haven't the vitamin A they used to have."

"This one has."

"But you've not been away for ages."

"I'm going to-night," I said.

"Who to?"

"You."

"Why, so you are." James turned away to light his pipe, then he whipped round. "Dammit, you can't write a Collins before you've been! It's unheard of!"

"Well, it's going to be heard of to-morrow morning, at breakfast. By the way, what is for breakfast?"

"How on earth do I know?"

"It's a point you would have discussed with Mary by this time if you had planned the operation with the fullest consideration for my comfort. I was going to put in a bit about how deeply touching it was to a town-dweller without benefit of Buff Orpington to be given not merely a real egg, but two real eggs, with his bacon. Fried. I was going to add that the absence of mushrooms was something which in war-time I found it easy to pardon."

"Here," said James, "I have work to do."

"Don't go," I begged. "You can help with what may be rather an important innovation in the social code. You see, the ordinary bread-and-butter letter has no significance at all, owing to its being invariably couched in overtones of unrelieved satisfaction."

"Of course, if you're not expecting to enjoy yourself—"

"My dear fellow," I said soothingly.

"What I mean is that if you read a notice by a reviewer names Jones of a novel by Miss Smiffkins which does nothing but say that beside Miss Smiffkins Tolstoy, Thackeray and Jane Austen were never even serviceable, your first thought is where and when did Miss Smiffkins write in similar terms of a novel by Jones. It's just the same with bread-and-butter letters. The note of honest criticism is fatally lacking."

"Read me what you've said," said James.

I did. When I got to: "*If we might run over, in perhaps more detail than is usual,*" he asked:

"What are we going to run over?"

"Last time I drove home with you it was a cow."

"These details."

"One was the question of wine. I was going to say how gratified I was that you had seen your way to sacrificing a second-growth claret from your depleted cellar, recalling that last time I stayed we had all three agreed that Château Finsbury Park wasn't worth the candle."

"Where do you imagine I can get second-growth claret?" demanded James.

"I gave you his address last week. I was also going to say I was glad to note that this time the bottle had been decanted, and also *chambred* with some attempt at reverence, not just put to sulk in the hot-cupboard."

James snorted.

"Now, touching your baby, James."

"The public are asked not to. She hates it."

"I'm a light sleeper, and when I go to the country it's bad enough to be awakened by those birds hours before I need to get up. But nursery puling in the middle of the night is a lot worse."

"How do you know my little Christabel is going to pule in the middle of the night?"

"Let's face facts, James. She always has."

"So you're lodging a complaint with the management?"

"Hardly a complaint, James. Just a little helpful, objective criticism. I'm still convinced Mary's running her with the wrong carburettor setting."

"Anything else?"

I consulted a list I had made out on the back of a letter from the Inland Revenue about tax relief where a rat-catcher had been employed.

"Hot-water bottle," I said. "I'm going to say it didn't matter as much as sometimes in the past not having one, as fortunately I'd remembered to pack my bedsocks."

"We don't cater for big cissies," said James.

"I dare say. But I've always promised myself that once I reached forty I could give up roughing it."

"Forty?"

"You haven't forgotten, James?"

"Forgotten what?"

"What I am at exactly eight twenty-three this evening?"

James looked properly flattened.

"Oo!" he exclaimed.

"Ah!" I added helpfully.

"I'm just going out for a bit."

"Good," I said heartily. "Before you do, the postscript will amuse you. It will read: 'I cannot lay down my pen without a word of real gratitude that so perfect a dinner in honour of the completion of my fourth decade should have been crowned by a cigar that attained nothing less than a poetic level. I feel sure James acquired it, with that enviable *flair* of his for running the excellent to earth, in the little shop at the corner of—'"

"I know the wretched place," James muttered crossly, as he slammed the door.

ERIC.

## At the Pictures

## COMIC CRIME

As a story, *Arsenic and Old Lace* (Director: FRANK CAPRA) demands, as you know even if you haven't seen the play (greetings, friend), a certain division of mind in the audience. The farce is based on contrast: on the impact of the appalling discovery that two gentle old ladies are mass murderers—the impact on their comparatively normal nephew. To taste the full effect the audience has to keep its standards normal; but—here is the division—if it does that thoroughly it can't admit the incredible absurdities anyway. You have to suspend disbelief if you are to pay any attention to the household with the twelve bodies in the cellar and the cheerful imitation Theodore Roosevelt who yells "Charge!" every time he goes upstairs; but you also have to regard with sympathy a (more or less) ordinary person's stupefied horror when confronted with it. Mr. CAPRA gets round this problem, which is hard to define intelligibly, by a narrative manner that might be summed up as playing the whole show through a double million magnifyin' gas megaphone of hextra power: the problem disappears in uniform turbulence and constant noise, and the normal nephew seems as crazy as everybody else.

In fact I suppose that to philosophize thus about divisions of mind and so forth will seem to thousands of fans a foolishly over-elaborate and pompous method of dealing with a roaring farce which never tries to be anything but a roaring farce. If you like to remember all the time exactly what you are laughing at (murder, madness and sadism) this piece is not for you; but the happily unthinking will find endless opportunities to lie back and wallow in amusement, and it may be that in constant over-emphasis Mr. CAPRA has found the formula for making nearly the whole of the audience forget to think. The homicidal old ladies are admirably played by the pair who made them famous on the Broadway stage, JOSEPHINE HULL

and JEAN ADAIR; the nephew is an unreasonably restless CARY GRANT; and the laughs come so thick that (as *Variety's* reviewer neatly put it) "considerable dialogue goes downstream."



[Arsenic and Old Lace]

## PIN-UPS

Jonathan Brewster . . . . . RAYMOND MASSEY  
Dr. Einstein . . . . . PETER LORRE

The old magic seems to be gone in *The Thin Man Goes Home* (Director: RICHARD THORPE)—for me, I hasten to add, for nearly all the other notices I have seen have surprised me by

expressing pleased approval; all, one gathers from them, is as it should be—as (several times before) it has been. I put down my vague discontent to the fact that *The Thin Man Goes Home* without W. S. VAN DYKE as director and without DASHIELL HAMMETT among the writers. The charming pair, MYRNA LOY and WILLIAM POWELL, turn on the old charm; the story is the same sort of story, the same mixture of crime, laughter and domesticity; but (it seems to me) everybody tries too hard, there is a certain hint of desperate endeavour behind the conscientiously bright dialogue, the moments of near-slapstick, the whimsical leg-pulling, the doggy humours—desperate endeavour to make up for the essentially thin and unremarkable story, the lack of much imaginatively fresh detail, and the absence of Mr. HAMMETT's gallery of bizarre minor characters. After all these years, I remember almost nothing of the story of *The Thin Man*—but I remember details: that brilliantly handled cocktail-party, the Christmas-morning foolery on the sofa, PORTER HALL's irritated bellow in a scene dominated by a freight-elevator. Of *The Thin Man Goes Home* I have already forgotten nearly everything except the very amusing opening sequences in the crowded train. Still, if you are POWELL-LOY fans, nothing will stop you from seeing for yourself; and perhaps if you are POWELL-LOY fans everything else is unimportant.



[The Thin Man Goes Home]

## DETECTIVE THROWS A PARTY.

Nora Charles . . . . . MYRNA LOY  
Nick Charles . . . . . WILLIAM POWELL

*Together Again* (Director: CHARLES VIDOR) means exactly what it says; I have a strong suspicion that they started with IRENE DUNNE, CHARLES BOYER, and the title. The two stars are together again, as they were in *Love Affair* and its (attempted) carbon-copy the title of which I forget, and once more the story is a light farcical one with patches of—not emotionalism this time, but a quality I find equally regrettable: that infinitely wise, tender and amused regard for the oddities of the young which Hollywood delights to exhibit. Apart from these patches, though, there is quite a lot of fun; it is a genuinely amusing picture. R. M.

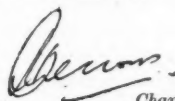
*The Secretary,  
Punch Comforts Fund,  
10 Bouverie Street,  
London, E.C.4.*

**M**Y DEAR SIRS,—Your most generous parcels of woollies have come safely to hand and I should just like to take this opportunity of expressing my sincere thanks.

I shall be grateful if you will pass on to all your readers who contribute to your comforts fund my sincere appreciation, for it is only through the unseen, and all too often unacknowledged, work of such people that we are enabled to issue to our seafaring lads those extra garments which they need so much and appreciate so warmly.

With all good wishes and very many thanks for your generosity to us at all times.

I am, Yours sincerely,



Chaplain

Registered under the War Charities Act, 1940

## Fraternization

**H**AIL! Well met, fellow! How you do, do you?

How is this? You are not a spokesman towards me and my two daughters, who, all of us, we don't just now be offensive, hopefully. Be so good as to chat, I say!

What, soldier, you are still the dumbbell, not vouchsafing some replies?

Speak up! It is not our fault of being Germans, but just by the mercy of Providence. Believe me, if you will, my two daughters and I, all of us, we are not political persons.

It was pushed us forward by the Nazis all the time, irresistibly. What a chance we had, I tell you!

Only see. My two daughters, how they are demure, thinking that war is horrid.

Soldier, do not walk away from us who are only meaning to say the right thing.

Walk slowly, I beg. I am rheumatic. All I wish to say is greetings to your general. What a great man he is, I expect!

It is because I wish to be helpful in the government that I implore of

you being more garrulous than you are now so silent.

Be not of such a much haste, I beg! I have much doctrine and have read forbidden books. I know business is business and am dexter in seeing it done by tasks in less time than shouting "Jack Robinhood!"

I beseech of you not going on walking away. Be not so reticent, do!

How? Have you really broken into a trot? You place me in chagrin, who I just propose to be nice.

Very well. Good-bye, then! See you soon, I say.

But do not misjudicate, howsobe you are king-up-at-the-castle just now.

Remember I only wish to be helpful in government, at which I am topdog for so many years. I would be valid and docile to your general, should he wish for a handyman. Stay! . . . Auf wiedersehen . . . Schweinhund!

"Haegg has expressed the view that the four-minute mile is now only a matter of time."—*The Recorder*.

Too true.



"I say, we WERE lucky to get a table!"





"You can't expect a box of matches every time you buy an ounce of snuff—now can you?"

## The Phoney Phleet

LXII—H.M.S. "Patriarch"

**L**IEUTENANT (S.) B. "Pusser" Smith,  
Like many others of his kith,  
Desired above all else to grow a beard.  
He wanted to look rough and male,  
Not secretarial and pale,  
But every time he tried, nothing appeared.

At last he thought, and quite right too,  
What Nature wouldn't, Art must do,  
And on his next long leave went up to town.  
There "Pusser" purchased off the peg  
A beard that reached the lower leg:  
A massive work in shades of seaweed-brown.

It took him just a little while  
To find out how to eat or smile,  
Or breathe, or wash his neck, or tie his tie.  
Then, being careful not to trip,  
He rejoined *Patriarch*, his ship,  
With chin (as far as feasible) held high.

The beard achieved a *succès fou*  
From (a) the social point of view—  
Now even total strangers seemed to smile—

And (b) from that of his career—  
Admirals murmured "Look what's here.  
We must promote this comrade—he has style."

Within a year, or maybe less,  
Smith had become a Commodore (S.)—  
A rank created specially for him.  
The universe (inclusive Fleet)  
Lay prone and supine at his feet;  
King's Regulations altered at his whim.

Woe's me, a tricksey thing is Fate!  
One evening, having stayed up late,  
Smith went on deck for air. There was a storm.  
Caught in a cataract of rain  
His beard got wet and lost its stain,  
Reverting to its basic off-white norm.

For someone's whiskers to turn white—  
And do it in a single night—  
Is utterly against the usual drill.  
Moreover, seeing that his crown  
Retained its pristine shade of brown,  
Folk were convinced that Smith was gravely ill.

Despite his protests he was sent  
To Haslar, where he underwent  
Exhaustive tests that nearly drove him bats.  
But come what may his lips were sealed.  
His secret wouldn't be revealed;  
The bearded Smith must not be proved ersatz.

At last the chemists turned it in.  
This wasn't illness. This was Sin.  
Smith wouldn't speak—his conscience must be  
black.  
And so they entered on his chit  
The nearest service term for it—  
Viz.—"Self-inflicted wound." He got the sack.

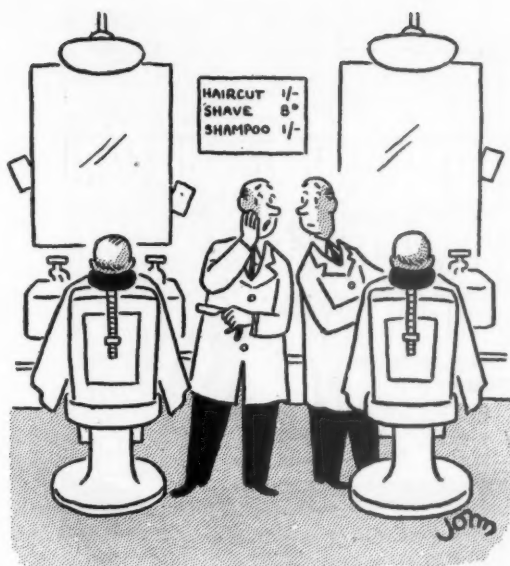
## Our Open Forum

IX—Why Bother About Trade?

Mr. Mameluke Broun, who makes this close-knit contribution to our series of chats on *Reconstruction*, is brimming over and up-to-date. He types all his own articles. Mr. Broun is best known perhaps for his brother, Lord Skewer, who was involved some years ago in the sad affair of Moulson Bequest Trustees versus Huddersfield Museum. Leaving school at fourteen plus, Mr. Broun entered the good offices of Messrs. Shift and Sidelong Ltd., where he remained for thirty-two years. Long before that period had elapsed the firm had changed its name to Shift and Sons Ltd.—Sidelong had been at death's door for years. Mr. Broun is well qualified to deal with this vital topic, for he is a B.Sc. Moreover he is a gifted pioneer.

**U**NDER the Essential Work Order, friends, no subject can be lightly dismissed. Trade is no exception. It must be given the most-searching examination and nothing, however trifling, must be withheld if this article is to reach a reasonable length.

Until I was seventeen years old I never bothered my



"I've cut this one twice, but he doesn't bleed."

head about trade. This was not altogether surprising, for the subject was hardly mentioned at home. Indeed, I can recall fewer than a dozen occasions during all those years when my father or my mother so much as mentioned Most Favoured Nations or Reciprocity.

But in 1927 (or was it 1928?) I began to wonder why the French people export all their best wines to Britain and retain inferior brands for home consumption. Anyone who has seen a Frenchman eking out his wine (Charente-Inferieure, say) with water will realize how complicated trade can be. To say that the French send us their best wine to prevent it falling into the hands of the Germans every twenty years, or because an outbreak of foot and mouth disease has been confirmed among wine-pressers in Ivrogne le Sec, is to simplify the problem unduly.

The phenomenon is not of course peculiarly French. In Britain we rejoice when imports decline and exult when exports increase. In other words, the less we get for the more we give the happier we are. Why? Does anybody know? So deep is our hatred of imports that the Americans had to call their goods lend-lease supplies before we would look at them—even in the midst of total war. Is it duty that makes us so blind? Not entirely, for even twenty per cent. ad valorem is not absolutely prohibitive.

The principles of trade were first adumbrated by Adam Smith (and you couldn't find a name much more British than that even among naturalized immigrants). Smith showed that the idea of a division of labour could be extended very advantageously to the international field. If all nations specialized industrially and exchanged their products, not only would all be better off but shipping and marine insurance would prosper. Smith forgot one thing—that multilateral trade involves dealing with very hot countries where labour tends to be sweated.

This is a ticklish subject, friends; I will be as brief as possible. The British (and the Americans, I believe, though it is a long time since I studied their magazines) have

a rooted dislike of sweated labour in all its forms. Acid or alkali, it tends to break up homes and undermine society. It is definitely not a thing to be imported.

Well, there you are—deadlock. It is no use the Japanese stamping their goods

"DEFINITELY NOT SWEATED LABOUR."

They give the game away when they say:

"THESE GOODS ARE SOLD SUBJECT TO LOSS BY EVAPORATION."

Trade should always follow the flag unless the market is so remote that two journeys are hardly worth while. Cynics like Mr. Bernard Shaw contend that a missionary should precede the flag. This seems to me the very essence of red tape—three journeys instead of one, cross freights and, almost certainly, dreadful overlapping.

And now, friends, please go on talking among yourselves. Only if we all bother about trade will it and the Board of it pull their socks up. Hod.

### The Limbless Service Man

WE learn that our note in *Punch* on the work of the British Limbless Ex-Service Men's Association has brought inquiries from officers and men in all theatres of war. A new booklet has been published for the guidance of Service men who lose limbs, setting out provisions for limb-fitting, discharge, pensions and resettlement in civil life. A copy will be sent post free on application to the British Limbless Ex-Service Men's Association, 115 Birchfields Rd., Manchester 13.



"It says here that Britain won't fight."



"Have you ever paused to consider where you and I would be, Emily, if it wasn't for crime?"

### *Sir Blancrouge Fareth Forth to Meete His Lady.*

i

THE murkie nyght was falling o'er the plaine,  
Ywraught in sombre robes obscurely dight  
With mantling cloud, wher-through the starres  
in vaine  
Essay'd to spredd their influence colde and bryght;  
Beneath whose inkie pall a gentle knyght  
Up-on his wheele would streighte his journey take  
To her that was his heart and soules delyght,  
And would through fyre and water for her sake  
That him a pilgrym for her tender loue did make.

ii

And ther-on, synging loude, his iren steede  
He did for that aventure bolde prepare,  
That so yholpen thence with lucky speede  
He might that dreare and darksome forest dare  
Which him hath sever'd from his lady faire;  
And on his guard, yshapen lyk a bowe  
Above his tire, he limned hath with care  
A candid disk, that through the nyght did glowe  
As chaste as Dian's orbe, and whyt as driuen snowe.

iii

Whylome, he thought up-on his ladyes face  
That longe his eger comming did expect,  
And urg'd by joyous dremes, he wrought apace,  
That on the bowe with snowie circle  
deckt  
His keene and subtile fingers did connect  
Of rubious glas a round and curious eye  
That hadde it selfe no lyght, yet could reflect  
(As young Narcissus did him selfe espye)  
Anothers flaming lampe, and might be seen ther-by.

iv

And braue Sir Noel, that his master was,  
Did on his steede this other geare require:  
The which he did affixe, of ore and glas  
A cunning engyn, al compact of fyre,  
That brightly shon to light his journey dire;  
Eftsoones that gentle knyght yeed on his waye  
Through gloomie darke to winne his hearts desire;  
From her ne doubt ne daunger could him staye  
That in her care he should his tender no-things saye.





### THE EMPTY ROAD

"They have given us liberty, they have brought us arms. When will the food get through?"

## Impressions of Parliament

### Business Done

**Tuesday, February 20th.**—House of Commons: Home is the Wanderer (as Before).

**Wednesday, February 21st.**—House of Commons: Water!

**Thursday, February 22nd.**—House of Commons: Contributory Negligence.

**Tuesday, February 20th.**—Askers and answerers of questions in the first half-hour of to-day's proceedings did not get a fair deal. Of course Mr. Speaker kept perfect order, and everything was done with strict propriety. But Members' minds were not in the Chamber. They were somewhere in Downing Street, with Mr. CHURCHILL, fresh back from his visit to Yalta, in the Crimea, where he had conferred once more with President ROOSEVELT and Marshal STALIN.

There was one question everybody was asking and no one answered: "Is he coming to the House to-day?"

Suddenly while Sir JAMES GRIGG, the War Minister, was answering a routine question, there was an abrupt roar of cheers. Sir JAMES clearly suspected sabotage—or leg-pulling, at the very least—and stopped in the middle of a sentence. He swung round, drawing a metaphorical "gat," just in time to come face to face with Mr. ANTHONY EDEN, the Foreign Secretary, who had also been at Yalta.

For once, the cliché "bronzed and fit" really did speak truly, for the Foreign Secretary swept in with the stride of an athlete and the complexion of a musical comedy he-man. With a gracious nod in response to the cheers, he took his seat, and Sir JAMES went on with his reply.

A few moments later, with Sir JAMES still at the wicket, there was another roar of cheers. The War Minister takes readily to routine, and he stopped automatically while the House signified its welcome to Mr. CHURCHILL, who takes his applause with much of the air of a stage or film "star," and walks slowly through it, as though liking to make it last. The cheers would not have disappointed the most egotistical of Hollywood's stellar bodies.

The War Minister set off again—only to take on a resigned "Well, blow me down!" expression as "honourable Members opposite" (as they used to be called before the days when everybody is on the same side) raised a roar of their own.

Sir JAMES looked around to see which Wandering Minister it was this

time. But nobody came in behind him! So he looked across the House—to see Mr. "GEORDIE" BUCHANAN, the popular Back-bench Glaswegian, grinning and blushing a rich magenta as his Labour colleagues ragged him on his entrance to the House.

Just to show there was no ill-feeling, Mr. CHURCHILL joined in the cheers. He seemed, by the way, to be a bit startled by the bright red handkerchief that protruded from the jacket-pocket of his Chief Whip, Mr. JAMES STUART. Maybe it was a Salute to STALIN—or possibly only a Shortage of Coupons.

A few minutes after his appearance



AFFORESTATION

"The Government . . . have a great forestry programme in mind and they want to create suitable machinery for carrying it out."—Lord Selborne.

Mr. CHURCHILL was in action, answering a question by Colonel MONTAGU LYONS, about a "shark repellent" which, it seems, had been discovered in the U.S.A.

Everybody took this to be some device for defeating black-marketeers, but apparently the P.M. knew better, for he gave a highly technical reply, in which he assured the Colonel that the Government knew all about the invention. And then he added, with a bland smile, that "my honourable and gallant friend may rest assured that the Government are entirely opposed to sharks!"

What a graceful performer is Mr. ARTHUR GREENWOOD, when Parliamentary courtesies have to be observed! He asked when there was to be a debate on the Yalta Conference, setting the

cheers going all over again by adding that the House was glad to welcome Mr. CHURCHILL and Mr. EDEN back once more.

Thereafter, the House drifted—that is quite certainly the correct word, so nonchalant was it all—into a debate on teachers' salaries. Some Members complained that the salaries of graduates were too near to those of non-graduates. Or it may have been the other way round. Anyway, they did not like it.

Mr. ARTHUR WOODBURN got so involved in a simile about a honey-pot, and the number of people entitled to put their spoons into it, and the size of the pot, and the amount of honey therein, that a United States soldier in the Gallery politely asked your scribe whether there were State bee-farms in Britain.

However, Mr. R. A. BUTLER, the Minister of Education, who contrives to combine an intense realism with an equally intense idealism, brought things back to earth again with a speech in which he promised to do what he could about the grievances, and to see that local education authorities did not pay too great a price—in the form of rate-burden—for enterprise.

Which seemed to please nearly everybody.

**Wednesday, February 21st.**—Mr. WOODBURN looked quite pained when Mr. E. P. SMITH got in first with a question about the amount of honey eaten in Britain, but (as the advertisements say) the laughter turned to amazement (or something) when Colonel "JAY" LLEWELLIN, the Food Minister, said he could not say.

Jocular sort of day, on the whole.

The B.B.C. got into trouble again, with Captain FLUGGE suggesting that a Member of the House of Lords be appointed to the Board of that Corporation, in order, as it seemed, to ensure that the Other Place got an occasional mention in the news and features. Lord READING, who was due to give the "Week in Westminster" feature at the week-end (and who was sitting in the Gallery), made a note of the point.

Mr. STOKES, having failed to get any too clear an answer from the Postmaster-General about a proposal to reduce the price of air-letters, gave the useful information that the present fee represents a charge of £9,000 a ton.

Mr. DUNCAN SANDYS, the Minister of Works, appeared in the rôle of Pied Piper of Hamelin—or rather, he refused the casting offered by Sir WILLIAM DAVISON. Sir WILLIAM had discovered that rats (the furry sort) are taking over Hyde Park, and an



"... and there's just one slight formality—I gather you are rather expected to do the lawns, topiary work and kitchen garden up at the Hall."

island in the lake in particular, and he wanted to know what, if anything, was being done about the invasion.

Mr. SANDYS replied that the number of rats did not seem to be abnormal, and that they were being killed at the rate of two a day. This reply seemed to cause inordinate mirth, particularly to the Prime Minister. Onlookers wondered whether some political implication was being drawn; but nobody explained.

For the record: Mr. CHURCHILL ruled that the Atlantic Charter is "a guide and not a rule." Members who will have a thing or two to say, anon, about some recent international decisions, cheered a little ironically.

Dr. LITTLE, in his rich Irish brogue, asked that the end of the war be celebrated by closing all licensed premises. Mr. CHURCHILL was non-committal, but with a fairly clear bias against the idea, saying that the great day would be celebrated "in a manner worthy of the British nation."

Dr. LITTLE (still in his rich Irish brogue) asked that the day should be a "day of rest from all toil and sobriety," and looked more than a little astonished at the success of this remark, which may not have expressed his precise meaning.

Mr. NOEL-BAKER, for the Ministry of War Transport, gave some startling figures—totalling the better part of £2,000,000—of thefts from the railways of Britain last year. Mr. GALLACHER, the Communist Party, proposed that this tendency to light-fingered private enterprise might be countered by a spot of communal light-fingeredness; by the State taking over the railways. People just laughed.

Another piece for the record: Mr. A. V. ALEXANDER, First Lord of the Admiralty, announced that all members of the Royal Navy were "not angels or anything like it." This was received with incredulity.

Plans for a national water supply were then discussed—to the intense

joy of Lady ASTOR and Dr. LITTLE. Most of the House poured itself out into the smoking-rooms.

Thursday, February 22nd.—There was much chit-chat in the Commons on the subject of contributory negligence. For most of the day the majority of M.P.s neglected to attend. To what that contributed—if anything—did not emerge.

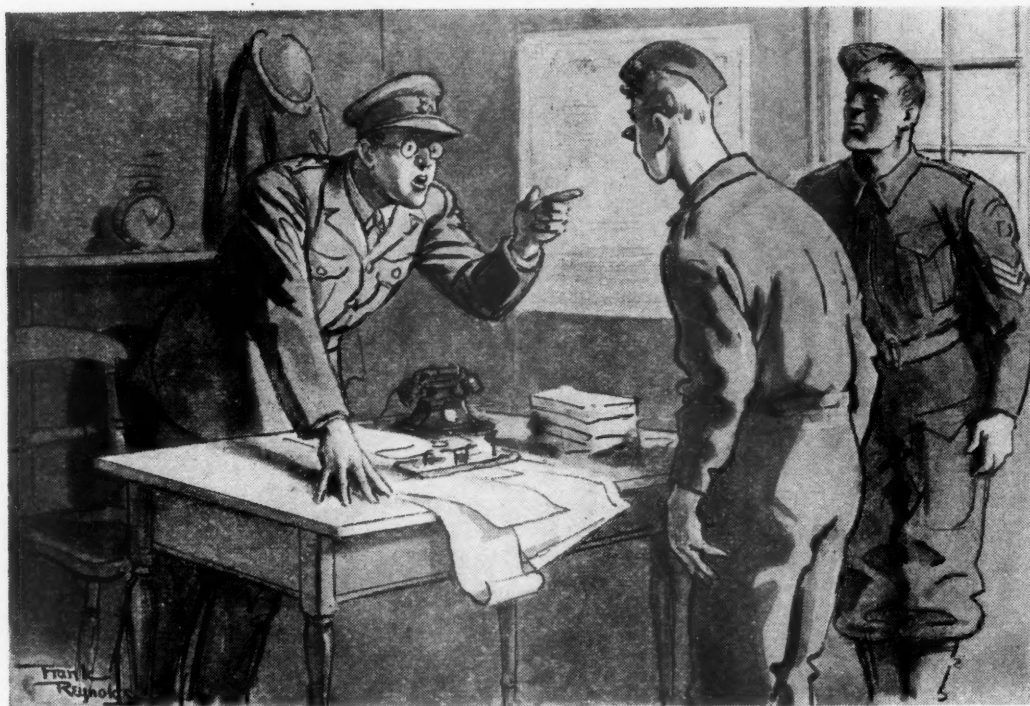
But next week there is to be a three-days' debate on the Yalta Conference.

#### One Thing at a Time

"Sonia Thomas, aged 4, whose parents live at Whitehawk-crescent, Brighton, received a child's needle-work basket as a present from her parents, and when trying to thread her first needle she swallowed it. She was taken to hospital, and was found to be suffering from chicken pox. Efforts are being made to trace the needle."

Evening paper.





*"But don't you realize that a frivolous complaint is an EXTREMELY serious matter?"*

## Not So Silly

A Child's Guide to Parliament—XI

**L**AST time, Rich-ard, we were talking a-bout priv-i-lege; and I told you that the ide-a of that was not to ex-alt the ind-i-vid-u-al Mem-bers but to en-a-ble them all to do their du-ties with-out fear or fa-vour.

For ins-tance, there are still some int-er-est-ing rem-nants of the old days when there was trou-ble be-tween the Mon-arch and Par-lia-ment. They seem to be on-ly mu-se-um pie-ces now, some of them; but you nev-er know; and it is just as well that they should be pre-serv-ed, how-ev-er sill-y they seem to the spec-ta-tor, who does not re-mem-ber how im-port-ant they us-ed to be, and in the-or-y might be a-gain.

At the op-en-ing of ev-er-y Ses-sion the faith-ful Comm-ons troop to the Bar of the House of Lords and there, in a some-what in-san-i-tar-y hudd-le, list-en to the Gra-cious Speech from the Throne, ann-ounc-ing the var-i-ous Meas-ures which the King's Min-ist-ers

in-tend to lay be-fore them. They then re-tur-n to their own place where the Speak-er reads the Gra-cious Speech a-gain. But be-fore that some Bill, as a rule the Out-law-ries Bill, is form-all-y read a first time and ord-er-ed to be read a sec-ond time. The point of this is to make it clear that the faith-ful Comm-ons claim the right to choose their own sub-jects for de-lib-er-a-tion what-ev-er Meas-ures the King's Min-ist-ers may have in mind.

Well, that is all ver-y right and prop-er, but as a matt-er of fact this is one of the few things which, in the hum-b-le judg-ment of your Un-cle Hadd-ock, do seem to be rath-er sill-y, not in prin-ci-ple but in ex-e-cu-tion. It would be all ver-y well for the Comm-ons to in-sist on deal-ing with their own Bill first, if it was a re-al Bill and they re-al-ly dealt with it. But it is not a re-al Bill, and they do not deal with it at all. I have spent some time re-cent-ly trying to find out what the

Out-law-ries Bill is all a-bout. I find from the Or-der Pa-per that it was du-ly read a first time (that is, in-tro-duc-ed) on the first day of the pre-sent Ses-sion and "ord-er-ed to be read a sec-ond time," but not to be print-ed. I find from the "Long Ti-tle" that it is a Bill for the more eff-ect-u-al pre-ven-tion of clan-des-tine out-law-ries. I find, fur-ther, aft-er some re-sear-ch in the Li-brar-y, that in 1878 out-law-ry was a-bol-ish-ed in civ-il caus-es, and so late as 1938 it was a-bol-ish-ed in all oth-er caus-es. So that if clan-des-tine out-law-ry (what-ev-er that may be) is still go-ing on, it is prett-y bi-zar-re, and some-thing of a scan-dal, and you would ex-pect Par-lia-ment to dash the Bill through all its sta-ges with all the dis-patch and vig-our of which it is ca-pa-ble.

But what happ-ens in fact? The Comm-ons ord-er it to be read a sec-ond time, Ses-sion aft-er Ses-sion,

but make no pro-test when it is not. And since they do not order it to be printed, no man can read it and find out what it says. It does not appear on the Order Paper with the other Bills which the Government proposes to lay before the House as time and opportunity serves, so it is forgotten. And all the time, presumably, the horrid business of clandestine outlawry continues unabated and unashamed.

What is clandestine outlawry, I-vy? Well, as I have told you, through no fault of my own, I am unable to tell you much about this thing. I have met one or two veteran Members who declare that long ago they saw, with their own eyes, the tattered and dirty document which is the only existing copy of the Outlawries Bill. But even they could not remember what it said. So I can only guess.

But, as a rule, if you are declared an outlaw by the State you have to flee the country, you lose all civil rights, you are turned out of your clubs, you can be shot at sight by any one, and that sort of thing. But how all this can be done in a clandestine (or secret) manner is more than I can tell you: because, for example, how is any one to know that you are a person who can be shot at sight unless the fact is made pretty public? Also, how any outlaw is to flee the country in these days is beyond me; it is difficult enough to get out if you have the permission and cooperation of all the relevant authorities.

So, as I say, the mystery is profound. It is not even clear who introduced the Bill. As a rule the names of one or two Ministers principally interested in a Bill are printed on the back (that is called "backing" a Bill) and the name of the Minister principally responsible is in the record. But here there is no record. The Outlawries Bill simply appears from nowhere and disappears in the same direction; and for all I know it was introduced by the Queen of the Fairies.

And there is another queer thing. The point of the Outlawries Bill, as I explained, is to confirm and keep alive the claim of the Commons to discuss what they like, whatever the King and the King's Ministers may want them to discuss or do. But, ever since the War began, no sooner has the Outlawries Bill been read a first time and ordered to be read a second time than the Government demands, and the Commons loyally

but sheepishly concede, that the Government shall take all Parliamentary time, that private Members' time shall be taken away and, in other words, that the Commons shall not be allowed to discuss what they like, but may only discuss such subjects as are brought before them by the King's Ministers. So that in war-time it might be said that it was a waste of time to give to the Outlawries Bill even so much attention as is involved in the imagining-ary reading of an imagining-ary Bill.

Your Uncle Haddock does not agree. It is well worth while to keep alive these constitutional rights-of-way: for who knows when they will be suddenly denied if they are allowed to be forgotten. What your Uncle does maintain is that they should be kept alive in a more serious and realistic manner. In this case, for example, why be content to begin the proceedings of the Session with a formal imagining-ary Bill which it is not intended to carry any further? At the opening of a Session there are lots of real Bills ready—or there should be. Why not put down one of them for the first day—if it is only the "Crossing Sweepers (Superannuation) Bill"?

I could give you another example if I thought that you were more interested than you look. Ever since King Charles the First rudely interrupted the proceedings of the Commons—being, if I remember rightly, in pursuit of the Five Members, or some body—ever since then, I repeat, I-vy dear—stop chewing, Richard!—the Commons, without being rude, have carefully but firmly insisted that no outsider, not even His Majesty, may enter their place during their proceedings.

Now, from time to time, it is necessary for His Majesty to send a message to the Commons—for example, when it is desired that the Commons shall attend in the House of Lords to hear the Royal Assent given to certain Bills which have passed through both Houses. Such messages are brought by an officer of the House of Lords called (delightfully, you will agree) the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod, commonly known as "Black Rod".

"Black Rod", nobly dressed in knee-breeches and so on, marches slowly with dignity and grace from one House to another, bearing the King's message. But as he approaches the House of Commons he is espied, as if an enemy, the door is shut in his face, and somebody (I forget who) cries "Who goes there?"

Black Rod hammers on the door, announces his identity and is graciously admitted. Even then he behaves with great respect to the Speaker and the House and bows three times before he announces the purpose of his visit.

Well, now, all this is all very well. But just when Black Rod approaches the House of Commons your poor Uncle Haddock is on his feet, approaching the end of an important speech about the future of Newfoundland, and fumbling for his peroration. What is a peroration, I-vy? It is the finishing-off of a speech and ought to be better than the bit before. And whether it is Newfoundland or what-not you may bet your boots, children, that as soon as your poor old Uncle begins to fumble for his peroration, the purport of which he has forgotten, there will be loud hammerings somewhere and cries of "Order! Order!" Your Uncle, wondering what he has done wrong, now looks anxiously in all directions, suddenly perceives Black Rod advancing up the Floor, and sits down hastily, dutifully, but not wholly gratified. The Members, led by the Speaker, then go to the House of Lords; and when they return about ten minutes later your Uncle has to start again. But by this time those who were there before have forgotten what it was all about.

And all your Uncle humbly suggests is this: Pre-serve, by all means, the ancient forms and ceremonies, but let them be real. In other words, when Black Rod approaches, let someone cry "Wait, sir, wait! In good time we shall be glad to see you. But Mister Haddock is now fumbling for his peroration. And heaven knows when that will be over."

A. P. H.

#### Verb. Sap.

"It is understood that Lord Wakehurst, Governor of New South Wales, will return to England this year. His term of office ends in April, but it is likely that he will continue until May or June unless the British Government asks him to remain."

Daily paper.

#### Difficulties of Colonial Journalism

"NOTE"

I regret the non-appearance of the LATEST News yesterday. This was due to the absence of the boy who held the key to the office, he was a Mahomedan enjoying his religious festival with the key in his pocket.

W. J. HAY."

Mauritius paper.

## At the Play

"LAURA" (ST. MARTIN'S)

Who is *Laura*? What is she, that every man adores her? On the word of Miss VERA CASPARY and Mr. GEORGE SKLAR she is a young woman of shattering charm and a habit of assaulting her rivals with an *hors d'œuvre* dish. This, in itself, would endear her to all; but darling *Laura*, serpent of New York, has other qualities. She runs high-powered advertising campaigns at a suitably high-powered salary. When she wants to think she drives to a country cottage and paints the furniture. When she is assumed to be dead a detective falls in love with her portrait, and her flat is filled with mourners who sigh for the touch of a vanished hand.

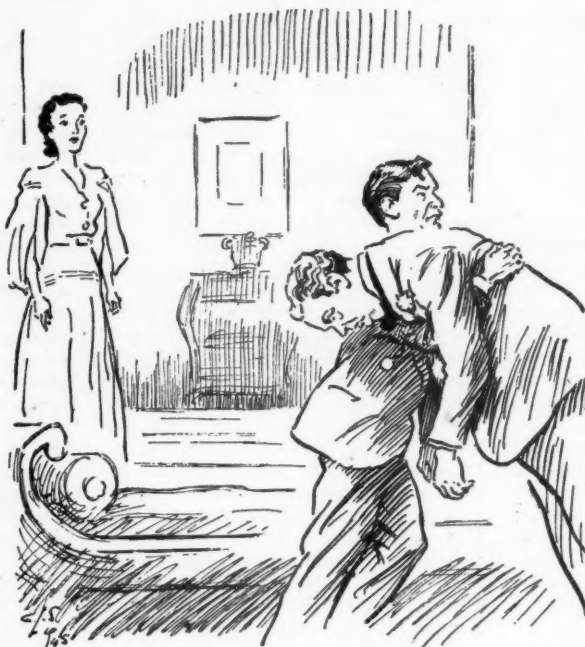
One of these mourners is a literary *poseur* (Mr. RAYMOND LOVELL) with a Yellow Book mind and a prose style in keeping. Another is the janitor's musical son (Mr. PETER HAMMOND) whom *Laura* has swayed from Sibelius to swing. A third is her intended husband (Mr. LESLIE BRADLEY), an unstable pillar of the deep South. The world may think that *Laura* is dead, but we in the audience know better. Miss SONIA DRESEL ("A Woman," says the programme coyly) has yet to arrive. She that's coming must be provided for, and thanks to her friends *Laura* gets an almost frightening build-up. Until she comes we are giddy: expectation whirls us round.

Presently, as the act wanes, *Laura* appears. She has been away in Connecticut with her furniture and her thoughts. Dead? Not at all: the faceless corpse in the flat was a friend of hers. Good: we can settle down blithely to spot the murderer and to yield to *Laura's* conquering charm. Neither task is simple. The authors, let us grant, know all about suspense. Disappointingly, they seem to know less about *Laura*. Although the actress does everything that intelligence can do, the super-woman prepared for never arrives. (We reflect that Miss

DRESEL, with that dangerous dark-velvet voice and the pouncing swiftness of her mind, would be better employed as the *châtelaine* of Inverness.) Now that *Laura* has proved to be legendary, our interest in the local murder must fade a little. It is enough to say that the authors have competently masked the truth, and that there is much pleasant acting, especially by Mr. ROBERT BEATTY as a dallying detective; Mr. LOVELL in his green-carnation manner, drifting idly down

End call on his way to the Middle East, brought with him two new productions, *Much Ado About Nothing* and—more important—*Macbeth*. We have long waited for Mr. WOLFIT to revive the tragedy. Now that he has summoned all his spirits to this daunting feat, his performance must stand not far below Mr. Laurence Olivier's (at the Vic. seven years ago.) The poetry is there, the terror and the pathos. Mr. WOLFIT never lets us forget the man's battle-honours. This *Macbeth* is plausibly both "valour's minion" and brooding poet. We can note only a few of the actor's moments—the stealthy progress towards *Duncan's* chamber and the laden horror of the return, the strangled cry at "What hands are here?" the slow tolling of "night's yawning peal," and at the last (Mr. WOLFIT might reconsider his make-up) the unutterable weariness of the tyrant, trapped and bereft, as Birnam Wood comes upon *Dunsinane*. Throughout, when *Macbeth* is on the stage, excitement glows. It is another tale when he is off. Miss PATRICIA JESSEL's young *Lady Macbeth* is a gallant effort, though never the fiend-like queen; Miss ROSALIND IDEN gives some character to *Lady Macduff*; and Mr. GODFREY KENTON interests us in *Malcolm's* self-condemnation which need not be the dull passage it so often is in the theatre. But Mr. REGINALD JARMAN rushes at *Macduff*, the *Witches* are negligible, and elsewhere there is merely noise for its own sake, the booming of that "Shakespearean voice" upon which Mr. WOLFIT, as producer, should frown.

The cast is better fitted in *Much Ado About Nothing*. Oddly, the comedy of the Merry War, a burst of Renaissance sunlight, is seldom seen in London. The new revival, excellently plain, presents in Mr. WOLFIT's *Benedick* a good-humoured gallant who does not clown away the part as so many actors do, and in Miss IDEN a *Beatrice* who atones for a lack of natural glitter by her timing and pointing of the speeches. Mr. JARMAN knows his *Dogberry*, Mr. KENTON is a courtly *Don Pedro*, and altogether we do not doubt that Cairo will second the cheering of the Winter Garden. J. C. T.



CYNIC CONTINUES TO THROW HIS WEIGHT ABOUT.

A Woman . . . . . MISS SONIA DRESEL  
Mark McPherson . . . . . Mr. ROBERT BEATTY  
Waldo Lydecker . . . . . Mr. RAYMOND LOVELL

an epigram-clotted stream; and Miss MAIRE O'NEILL, doing high honour to the kitchen as *Bessie* the help.

*Laura* has been praised warmly—and no doubt with reason—as book and film. On the stage it has no elbow-room and promises more than it can pay; there is too much preliminary talk and not enough action. Even a sliding panel or two would have enlivened matters. We who have with Wallace bled know what a stage thriller should be, and (we add with arrogance) it is not *Laura*. J. C. T.

"MACBETH"; "MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING" (WINTER GARDEN)

Mr. DONALD WOLFIT, making a West



## The Memoirs of Mipsie

By Blanche Addle of Eigg

### II—Nursery Days

WE were a high-spirited and happy family of children, singularly pure and unspoilt in our tastes, and with an almost austere upbringing in the midst of the splendours of Coots Balder. One wing alone was given to the nurseries. Our daily fare was unvaried—chicken and sole by turns, while no fruit but peaches and grapes was allowed on the table (except during the strawberry and raspberry season of course), with melons and pineapples on Sundays. We wore simple plush dresses in the winter and fine muslin in summer. Our petticoat ribbons followed a rigid pattern as to colour: blue in winter, pink in summer, mauve in Lent. "I want red—I will have red!" I remember Mipsie saying once, in her lovable commanding way. That night, when the butler poured out my father's port, something stuck in the neck of the decanter. It was Mipsie's ribbons, which she had attempted to dye!

Of course she was no more blamed for that escapade, though it was priceless port of the most up-to-date vintage that money could no doubt buy, than she was when she stole one of King Edward VII's spats and buttoned it round her small self, saying "I want to know what a royal leg feels like"; or when she used a whole bottle of a visiting duchess's French scent to put behind the ears of her pet dog, Rascal—a delightful fox terrier puppy, beloved by us all. (Alas, when he grew up his temper became uncertain and he had to be given to the head groom's children as he was considered no longer safe to keep.)

What a happy place was nurseryland and what exciting games we used to think out!—for we were unusually intelligent and original children, I believe. Hide and Seek, Hunt the Thimble, Cobbler, Cobbler, Kiss in the Ring. Even papa, who underneath his rather forbidding manner had all the enthusiasm of a boy, used to delight in playing this when he sometimes brought visitors up to the nursery, or even when alone. We had a very pretty nursery-maid called Eva, with lovely golden curls and a face like a cherub. In fact we used to call her "The Angel" because she looked exactly like a picture of angels saving a sheep from falling down a well, which hung in the nursery. Papa always insisted on her joining in too, for he was often

quite democratic in his views, I have noticed, so we were a splendid party. The mention of angels reminds me of a story of Mipsie which I specially love. One night she slipped out of bed and stole along to the day nursery to retrieve a favourite doll which Nannie had hidden as a penalty for some childish misdeed. But Mipsie knew just where it was—she was so clever in those ways—and also that Nannie would be downstairs having supper. However, she returned, to my surprise, without it, and looking rather thoughtful. Silently she climbed into bed. Then, after a pause, "Blanche," she said "can angels sit on people's knees?" I considered the point, having always been interested in theology from a child. "I don't really know, darling," I remember saying, "but I shouldn't think so." "That's just where you're wrong," said Mipsie. "They can." But not another word could I get out of her on the subject. What wondrous celestial vision had been vouchsafed to a child's innocent believing eyes that night, I wonder?

Most of our youth was spent in our historic and beautiful home, but every summer we went to stay with some Scottish cousins, the McTott of Rum and Lady Agnes McTott, on their beautiful island adjoining Eigg, my husband's native soil. It is strange to think I must have met him, for he often used to come over for picnics. Indeed, I remember a sturdy freckled boy finishing off a beautiful sand castle

near us one day, and then my brother Humpo, who was adorably mischievous, taking a flying leap on to it! The older boy immediately put down his iron spade and picked up a bucket, so as to hit Humpo's head with something less heavy. I recollect, even at that early age, being struck by such gallantry.

Another memory of Rum comes back over the years, and one that still makes me shudder.

On that rocky and sometimes treacherous coast the tide often turns unexpectedly and creeps in with the pace of a galloping snail. One day I was lying on the shore absorbed in a book when, happening to glance up, I saw Mipsie, some twenty feet distant, perched on a big rock. Suddenly I remembered with horror that the tide was almost on the turn. In half an hour it might reach Mipsie's rock. In an hour it would undoubtedly have surrounded it.

What should I do? Should I go and tell Nannie, sitting beside the sleeping Humpo under the shade of the cliff near by? Or should I dash round the bay to the village and rouse one of the fishermen from his afternoon nap? But both courses would take time, and time was the vital factor. Within five minutes I had made up my mind. I would go to Mipsie's aid myself.

Swiftly I made my way over the sharp rocks and urged my little sister back, saying only that tea was ready, so as not to alarm her. When we reached Nannie I sank down, I remember, trembling a little with shock. But youth is resilient, and a good tea soon put me right. As we ate it, though, I watched the cruel waves coming nearer and ever nearer to the rock on which Mipsie had so lately stood. When we left the beach some forty minutes later I glanced back. The rock was entirely covered. I breathed a little prayer of thankfulness as I looked at my beloved sister, dancing gaily ahead, blissfully unconscious of her amazing escape from a terrible death.

M. D.



"... yesterday's recipe: After the instruction to turn on the gas, I should have added 'light it'."

"CONTRARY to popular belief, Dandruff is not caused by dryness. Dryness causes Dandruff. And Dandruff is caused by a germ..."—Advt.

Oh well, let's not argue.



"The advantage of à la carte, apparently, is that you can have the shepherd's pie WITHOUT peas."

### Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

#### Stefan Zweig

STEFAN ZWEIG, a cultured and prosperous Austrian Jew, belonged in his outlook and sympathies to the world before the last war, to a civilization which offered a great deal to anyone who was interested in art, letters and travel, and could afford to indulge his tastes. Representative of everything that excited Hitler's resentment when he was poor and unknown in Vienna, ZWEIG was inevitably included among Hitler's victims when Hitler returned to Vienna as a conqueror, for though he escaped to South America he could not accommodate himself to a world given over to violence and hatred, and committed suicide together with his wife at the beginning of 1942. As his studies of Balzac, Tolstoy and Dostoevsky show, he was attracted by demonic and incalculable natures, but his exclusively aesthetic attitude to life made him unable to sustain in reality what he appreciated between the covers of a book. His limitations are perhaps more obvious in his fiction than in his critical studies. *The Royal Game* (CASSELL, 7/6) contains three long short stories, the first of which gives the book its title. They are well-constructed and exciting, two merits more often found in the short stories of thirty and forty years ago than in the short stories of to-day; and the first of them, which must have been written not long before ZWEIG's death, however improbable in other respects, is real and poignant in its evocation of the torture of solitary confinement. But in the other two stories, written before misfortune had sharpened the author's sense of reality, there is little except the suspense of an unsolved situation to lure the reader on. In "Amok," a German doctor, living in the wilds of Java, behaves in a way which greatly raises one's admiration for the verisimilitude Mr. Somerset Maugham has managed to impart to similar characters involved in similar situations. In "Letter From An Unknown Woman," ZWEIG displays an extraordinary ingenuity in inventing a love-affair which causes the man no trouble or responsibility of any kind, and exposes the

woman to years of suffering which end at last in death. A letter which the man, a famous novelist, reads in comfort, having drunk his morning tea and lit a cigar, apprises him that the writer will be dead when the letter reaches him, together with her child, his son. How and why all this comes as a surprise to the famous novelist is made clear in the letter, which falls from his hands, leaving him stirred by the thought of the dead woman as though by the sound of distant music. H. K.

### Poet's Progress

No one who has encountered Mr. HENRY TREECE's poems of a flight-lieutenant in *Air Force Poetry* would wish him to diminish his poetic stature by a return to his civilian level. And those who enjoy—as many will—his second volume of verse, *The Black Seasons* (FABER, 6/-), will note how the realities of war have enhanced not only his contemplative range but his sense of melody. An artificial outlook can hardly produce convincing poetry; and one feels that the assumed passions of an age that winged flint arrowheads have not resulted in anything nearly so good as genuine reactions to real, if more hideous, modes of combat. The more urgent stress naturally ousts the more experimental technique, and unrhymed sonnets like "Age" and "The Possessors" cede to sonnets like "The Varied Faces" in which all the resources of one of the historical forms are clinchingly exploited. Not that Mr. TREECE's folk-music is untuneful or uninspired. "The Magic Wood," which answers what he himself sees as a "backwards" impulse with a "forwards" glance at earth and heaven, is as memorable in its way as "The Conscripts," "War Poem," "To Certain Ladies," "Lyric" and "A Lincolnshire Bombing Station." H. P. E.

### Two New Picture Books

When you show a child a picture the first thing it will say is "What's the man doing?" A little later, "What's that thing in his hand?" "Why's he only got one eye?" (or in the case of modern pictures, "Why's he got two eyes the same side of his face?") Colour comes second, all the same it is important, and art will always be penny plain, twopence coloured, to children. MERVYN PEAKE's *Rhymes Without Reason* (EYRE AND SPOTTISWOODE, 7/6) are modelled closely on Lear's Nonsense Rhymes—much more sophisticated, however, than their originals, and in this there is a danger, for woe unto the nonsense which makes a slightly unpleasant sense of its own. Mr. PEAKE's illustrations, however, are the thing; there are sixteen colour plates in the style of his rich fantastic pictures to the Hunting of the Snark, with long thin noses, rolling gorgeous eyes, and flowing tails. He has been wretchedly served, unfortunately, by his colour printers, who have reproduced them in a range of bilious hues, overlapping at the edges, which suggest a sort of flag-seller's night out. It says a great deal for MERVYN PEAKE as an artist that the book is still attractive. Mr. CHIANG YEE with his *Dabbitse* (TRANS-ATLANTIC ARTS, 10/6) has been much luckier. This is a little idyll of a Chinese boy and his water-buffalo, and the delicate tints of lotus flowers, bamboo groves and mountains near and far are all faithfully reproduced. They are in Mr. CHIANG's more formal, less westernized manner, delightful to children who will feel a deep inner satisfaction at being able to count every hair on the buffalo, every leaf on the tree and every blade in the grass. And as you look at the firm, tiny strokes you understand how it is that in the stricter Chinese art painting and handwriting are one.

P. M. F.

### Squeak and Gibber

Thanks to the labours of Neo-Scholastics the devil's auxiliaries have ranged themselves for most of us in a tidy sort of inverted pyramid leading down to Our Father Below. The fiend-ridden world portrayed by Mr. CHARLES WILLIAMS in *All Hallows' Eve* (FABER, 8/6) is not so well organized, being, in fact, a haphazard assemblage of phantasmagoria more tangibly based on the curtain-waving and butter-slide technique of the common spook than even Lewis Carroll's. A magician, finding the end of the present war diabolically propitious, builds up his own particular reign of evil in London. He hands out physical cures in return for enslaved souls; promises a share in his powers to ambitious youth; and not only inveigles the living into his clutches, but enlists the newly-blitzed dead, who, for reasons known only to the author, are still roving the streets on their way to heaven or hell. *Clerk Simon* has himself produced, with the aid of a female accomplice, a daughter predestined to assist his schemes for world domination. But *Betty*—though one cannot see her as anything so four-square as a schoolgirl—has two school friends, and when both are killed, one of them comes to *Betty's* rescue before "passing on."

H. P. E.

### English Poetry

It is becoming usual, when a new anthology appears, to claim that it is not merely an anthology, but something more and something better. On the jacket of Mr. CLIFFORD BAX's *Vintage Verse* (HOLLIS AND CARTER, 10/6) we read: "This is by no means 'just one more anthology of English poetry.'" Yet on the title-page it is described as "An Anthology of Poetry in English." Leaving this fine distinction to the consideration of the dialectically-minded, one notes that this anthology is of the kind which intersperses among its contents a running commentary from the editor. As Mr. BAX has well-defined preferences in poetry, and expresses them plainly, his commentary adds greatly to the interest of the book. He does not pass from tribute to tribute in the insipid fashion of some anthologists, but from warm praise to cold disapproval. Pope makes little appeal to him, and he endorses Lord Alfred Douglas's—"He knew how to write poetry, but had none to write." He finds William Langland flat-footed, and suspects that his "antique eulogy of the Little Man" has been overpraised for political reasons. He is unimpressed by Byron's romanticism, characterising him as "worldly, cynical, smart, brilliant—everything, in a word, which precludes the genuine poetic emotion." Meredith he judges to be, like Bernard Shaw, "too clever for immortality." His likes could be inferred from his dislikes, and range from Milton and Tennyson to Wilde and the first Earl of Lytton. He praises Shakespeare, but as he finds in Wordsworth "a sublimity which is for ever beyond the range of the humorous man," one must assume either that he is not amused by Falstaff or unimpressed by Lear. H. K.

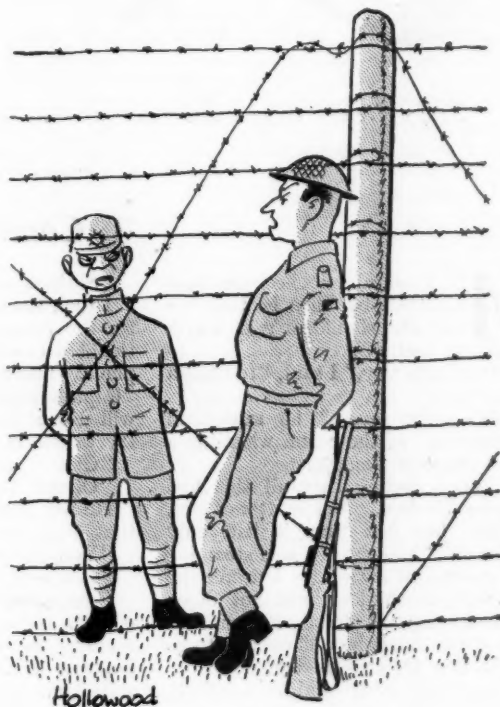
### Ghost in Love

The popularity of such pieces as *Berkeley Square* and *Still She Wished for Company* and now *The Heart Consumed* (LANE, 8/6) is understandable. Everyone, from Rochefoucauld (was it?) onwards, has proclaimed the brevity of love, and the natural reaction from this is to conceive love as lasting longer even than a lifetime and able to cross centuries in the pursuit of the beloved. The ghost in Mr. FRANCIS ASKHAM's first novel is a particularly melancholy one. He pursues and never attains, not in his lifetime (the early nineteenth century), nor in ours, nor

at some period a century or so ahead. He is Pierrot among ghosts, always gazing in at windows at the lives of others, seeing the wicked chancellor enamoured of his own niece (she is a variant of Pierrot's beloved), whispering dolefully and ineffectually in her ear at night, seeing the houses and the squares change, and incidentally, many small dramas. Mr. ASKHAM's fertile imagination goes to considerable trouble to disguise the thinness of his love-story, and his way with words is so agreeable that the reader will probably forgive him much for it. J. S.

### War in China

*Shanghai Harvest* (MUSEUM PRESS, 15/-), by Mr. RHODES FARMER, the *Melbourne Herald* war correspondent, deals with the period between 1937 and 1940 when China, so he says in his last paragraph, saved Asia from the Japanese and, possibly, the world from a carving knife wielded by Germany and Japan. He begins his book by going back to the marriage of Chiang Kai-Shek, then Commander-in-Chief of the Nationalist Army, and Mayling Soong, whose parents would consent only on condition that the husband too became a Methodist. We are given many pictures of this most remarkable couple and a description of the Generalissimo's "home town," Chikow, to which he kept sending many messages when a thousand miles away in Western China. All these almost domestic details come as the greatest relief in a book that gives many grim and revolting facts about Japanese methods of occupation. The author's personal adventures are exciting and well told, and his commentaries on China, particularly on General Chiang Kai-Shek's ideas about education, have great value. B. E. B.



"You'll be saying next that you were NOT selling at cut prices before the war."





"Yes, we're now on alternating current—the power station switches it on one minute and off the next."

### Communications

**M**Y landlord punched me hard in the ribs; then he took me by the shoulders and nearly shook my head off.

"That's no way," I said, "to treat a dying man."

"It's gorn seven," he said, and clumped out of the room, whistling a bit of *Madame Butterfly*.

I had a feeling that all this had happened before. As a matter of fact, it had; but last time it had only "gorn six," and my tea was steaming hot instead of icy cold. I drank the tea with a shudder and got down the bed again. I already had an idea that I should not be well enough to go to the War Office that day.

"It's gorn eight," said my landlord, after a minute or two.

"I'm ill," I said—"can you ring up from the call-box for me?"

"Shtink so. Saying what?"

I took the pad I keep by my bedside for the purpose of capturing inspirational dreams, wrote down the telephone number and the message. "Captain Bollinger has a bad cold and will not be in this morning, but may try to get in this afternoon."

"Okay," said my landlord.

"Okay," I said.

He was back almost at once, to say that he'd got the message through.

"You've been very quick," I said.

"It's gorn nine," he said.

Presently I heard him rattling away on his bicycle to his day's work, minding the boilers. I think he minds boilers. I know he sometimes gets called out in the middle of the night when there's a frost. He used to go off to work later and later as the mornings got darker and darker.

This seems to me to be a very good arrangement, and I have often wished the High Commands would get together and arrange something of the sort for soldiers.

"Mummay!"

The daughter of the house was awake. Her voice went through my head like a steel knitting-needle.

"Mummay! Wan' samming twate."

"In a minute," said my landlady, sounding surprisingly close. She was coming up the stairs. I have often thought, during the short time I have been at my present address, that I might do something helpful about teaching this penetrating five-year-old the English language. It seemed a shame that she was going to grow up into one of those pretty girls who shrivel everything within hearing as soon as they open their mouths. Her

voice followed her mother up the stairs with insistence.

"Wan' samming twate, mummy!"

"I said in a minute. There's others want something to eat besides you, my gel."

My landlady, who is a great respecter of the proprieties, opened the door and spoke to me from the other side of it.

"Lily Turnbull's called with a message," she said.

"Who has?"

"Mrs. Turnbull's Lily—you know."

I didn't know. I was feeling ill.

"Where you was," explained my landlady—"before you come."

"Oh, yes," I said.

Mrs. Turnbull had been a previous landlady of mine. Out of sheer kindness of heart she had taken me in temporarily and allowed me to sleep in her bed. She had formed the habit of sleeping in the cellar, with the coke. A falling-off in nocturnal visitors from abroad, however, coupled with the colder nights and the sudden demise of her oil-stove, had caused the situation to be reviewed. I had had to go.

Mrs. Turnbull's little girl was a strapping adolescent called Lily. I couldn't imagine why she had called.

"What's the message?" I asked.

My landlady took up a position of concentration behind the door, and repeated mechanically:

"The War Office want the number."

"What number?"

"Don't know. That's what she says."

"Wan' samming twate, Mam!"

"In a minute, my gel."

"Telephone number, do they mean?"

"Don't know. Would you like to speak to Lily?"

"I think I'd better," I said.

The small house shook to the mounting footsteps. There was whispering outside.

"Good morning, Lily," I croaked.

"What was the message exactly?"

"They wanted Mrs. Bollinger, Mr. Bollinger."

"They wanted what?"

"They asked for Mrs. Bollinger, because they said she'd rung them up, and they wanted to ring her up, and when Mum said she wasn't there because she'd gone back to East Anglar they wanted her number."

The door stirred slightly.

"That's awful," I said—"that's really awful, Lily. I see exactly what's happened. Mrs. Bollinger happened to ring me up at the War Office and they told her I was ill, and she would want to know how ill, thinking I'd been rocketed at the very least, but they wouldn't know how ill, because it's

ten to one she didn't speak to whoever got the message I sent, so they said they'd find out and let her know, and so they rang up your house because when I was living there I left that telephone number on the officers' address book and of course I've never thought to alter it. So now she's waiting for a call from them and she won't get it, because they didn't ask for her number because they thought they had it. Do you see, Lily?"

"I think so, Mr. Bollinger. Should I ring up and give them the number?"

"What number?"

"Mrs. Bollinger's number, Mr. Bollinger."

"Good gracious, no," I said. "They'd ring up with some information about my not actually being on the danger list, or something. I shall have to get up."

"Yes, Mr. Bollinger."

"Thank you for bringing the message, Lily."

"Thank you, Mr. Bollinger."

She thundered good-naturedly down the stairs, leaving the door open. The draught whistled through me like a knife. My landlady, feeling she could do no more, had already gone down. The five-year-old lifted up her voice.

"Wan' samming t—"

It seemed to me that the sentence finished itself in a spoonful of porridge.

From the call-box at the end of the road I called my wife. It took a long time, and call-boxes, which are hot in summer, are cold in winter. When the Exchange had insisted with unrestrained exasperation that they ought to know whether there was no reply or not, I came out into the windswept street, shivering. I should have liked some breakfast; failing that, some lunch. Even a shave would have been something.

I turned up the collar of my great-coat and set off feverishly for the Underground.

Major Perilmead swore when I walked into his office an hour later, and turned white.

"You look terrible," he said. "I thought you were in bed."

"I feel terrible," I said—"and I was in bed. What have you done to my wife?" I chattered my teeth at him and he pushed his chair back to the wall.

"Me?" he said. "Done to her?"

"I mean what have you been telling her?"

"Telling her?"

"About me."

"Look, old man," said the Major, ingratiatingly, "you're not yourself. You should never have come in at all

to-day. That's what I telephoned to say—but you'd left the wrong number; they said they'd take a message. Hadn't you better sit down?"

I sat down.

"You see," he went on, regaining confidence, "I wasn't here when your wife rang up to say you were ill—"

"Just a minute—"

"No, just a minute, old man—but when they passed on the message about you thinking of coming in later in the day I rang up to say you weren't to do anything of the sort."

"I don't see," I said, beginning to feel weak, "why anybody in this building should expect my wife to have a man's voice with a pronounced Middlesex accent—I expect the message came through an N.C.O. who got it from the girl on the switchboard, and he thought she was my wife—though why even an N.C.O. should expect my wife to . . . And I don't see," I branched off, "how I'm going to explain it all to Mrs. Turnbull—"

"What about your wife?"

"My wife's name is Mrs. Bollinger. She is in East Anglar."

"And Mrs. Turnbull is your landlady?"

"My landlady's name is Edwards," I said; "but Mrs. Turnbull used to let me sleep in her bed." I was feeling tired. "Though of course that was only during the raids."

"Er—naturally," said Perilmead.

"Her little girl, Lily, brought me the message."

"Your landlady's little girl?"

He really looked worried about me—my health and my whole way of life. I got to my feet, before he set about chafing my hands or something.

"My landlady's little girl is five," I said coldly, making my way towards the door, "and I have something in common with her."

"Oh, what's that?" He was humouring me.

"Wan' samming twate," I said, slinking weakly along to the lift.

He was looking very grave as the gates closed. I expect he is sending a message to me telling me to stay right away for a week. If so, I hope it doesn't get through. J. B. B.

#### This Week's Understatement

"The service went off the air several times two hours before dawn. The agencies European several times two hours before dawn. The agency's European news in English to the Far East. This indicates that the normal English service of the German News Agency was out of order."

Glasgow paper.

## Billets

"OH—Nobby! Come and look at my officer's room!"

This remark of my batman's to a fellow tyrant was the first intimation I had that my new billet was anything different from the usual run of cold and damp and depressing bits of dilapidation which have recently served to shelter me from some of the elements.

"Glass in the windows, sir," he added as he saw me approach. He was not a little proud of himself, because he had arrived first at the village by a series of dinky manœuvres that I know better than to inquire into, and had seized the best room in the best villa for me.

"Glass in the windows, sir!"

At that moment our own medium guns opened up and the glass fell out. A 4.5-inch battery had most effectively camouflaged itself in the neighbouring farm buildings.

"Oh, well, sir," said my batman, who is a most persistent and irritating optimist, "we never expected to have glass, did we, sir? After all, it wouldn't have seemed right for you to have glass and not the Colonel, would it, sir?"

"We may not have expected to have glass," I said with concentrated fury, "but I did hope for once—just once—you would have found me a billet rather further away from the gun areas. After all, the battalion is supposed to be having a rest."

"Never fire at night, sir!"

The audacity of this lie took me aback, and I let it go. For one thing, I had just spotted that there was a basin in the corner of the room with taps H. and C.

"Yes, sir," said the optimist, noticing my glance. "I thought you would

like that. Hot and cold laid on, as you might say. And the town water supply is on," he added, anticipating my usual carping attitude. "And there's a boiler downstairs. And there's a bath in the next room. Not so bad, eh, sir? Just the job!"

Most unreasonably I was annoyed, for I had fully intended to find fault somewhere. I need not have bothered. That evening he proudly led me to a steaming bath, heated, as I later discovered, by burning some priceless eighteenth-century furniture. (Later, there was a lot of trouble with the Contessa over those chairs.) I plunged in a foot, only to withdraw it, scalded. I turned off the HOT and turned on the COLD. It bubbled and spluttered, and then it too came out boiling. There was not a drop of water in the house which had not been heated by the accursed boiler, and the main water supply would not be on again until the morning.

Of course the only sensible thing to do was to dress again and to come back in half an hour. Instead, I shivered in my nudity, scalding first one and then another extremity in trying to convince myself that I could bear the heat. After one of the coldest and most purgatorial half-hours of my life, the water was at last cool enough, and I was just going to get in when there was an authoritative knock on the bathroom door. It was the Adjutant.

"I say, old man, the Colonel's heard about your bath and he's on his way over to have one. In fact if you haven't actually got in I think I should let him go first. You know what he's like if he's kept waiting."

After half an hour of shivering

suspense this was too much. I know that in the last century children used to be sent to warm their parents' beds, but to expect a subaltern to cool his commanding officer's bath for him is too much. However . . .

Then came the smell. My batman and I were both a little shy about the smell and we didn't mention it to anyone. But we searched high and low for a cause, only abandoning the quest when I got a rather embarrassed telephone call from the Adjutant.

"I say, old man, I hate to be the bearer of bad news, you know, but—well, you know how it is . . ."

"Leave stopped again, I suppose?"

"No, it's not that, old man. It's your room. You see, the Colonel finds it rather cold having to walk a quarter of a mile from his billet to your bathroom and . . ."

"He wants my room, does he?"

"Well, yes. I think he does, really. He said he didn't want to turn you out of course, but if you could . . ."

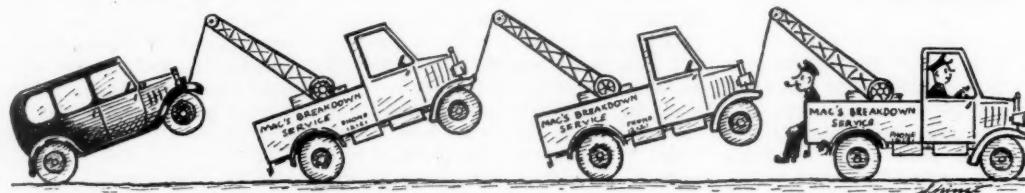
"Do I get his old room?"

"I'm sorry, old man, but the Second-in-Command is moving into the Colonel's room, and Major Macpherson is moving into his room, and . . ."

"Oh, all right. Where do I go?"

It proved to be a distant garage. But in the end I was glad of the SMELL. It was beneath the Colonel's dignity to explain why he wanted a second General Post of rooms, and as a result the whole battalion moved its billets to a much more attractive village at least five miles from the nearest medium gun.

Once again my batman was there first and got me a good room. And this time the Colonel let me alone.



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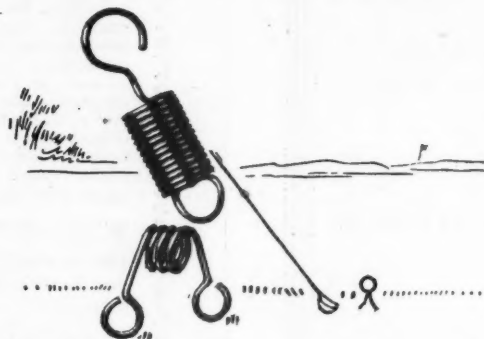
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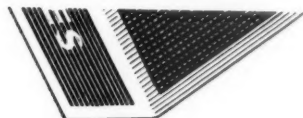
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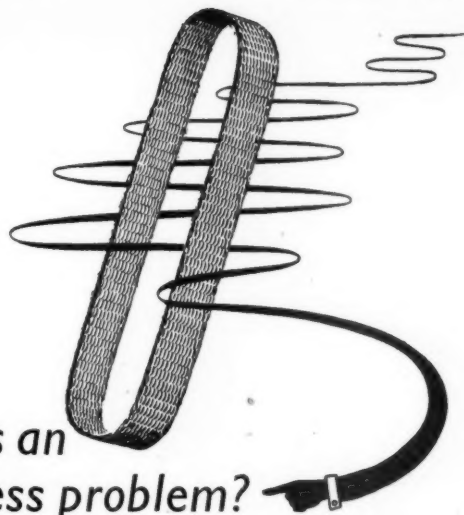
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